



WUJAL WUJAL ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL Newsletter February 2007

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Premier's meeting positive for Wujal Wujal Community

A series of meetings between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Councils and Cabinet on the Atherton Tablelands earlier this month has been described as "positive" by Wujal Wujal Mayor Desmond Tayley.

Cr Tayley said the meetings were attended by himself, Cr David Jackson and CEO Peter Opio.

"We met Local Government Minister Andrew Fraser, Queensland Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson, Child Safety Minister Desley Boyle and we made a deputation to Warren Pitt's staff, he had his secretary there to fill in for him on that day," he said.

"It's important for us to go to meetings like that so we can put our issues across and the government can put some funding in or things in place to try and address our issues up in community.

"I think it was a positive meeting."

He said a meeting with Minister Fraser in particular produced some positive outcomes for Wujal Wujal.

"We had a look at the minor boundary changes which we are about to start negotiations with Cook Shire Council on.

"They are only minor but will include five Wujal Wujal houses which are currently in the Cook Shire area as well as rectifying some problems we've had with the AMP in that area."

He said those negotiations would be putting what's now known as 'SSS' into practice. SSS stands for Size, Shape and Sustainability of local government councils in Queensland and was one of the change strategies being considered for councils.

Cr Tayley said the Wujal Wujal's neighbouring councils – Cook, and Mossman - had their first meeting together with Wujal Wujal in August last year.

"I think we've got to concentrate on the SSS, which is a big



Wujal Wujal Mayor Desmond Tayley

thing for the council here," he said. He said other issues raised with Minister Fraser included sewage and maintenance program funding and new council chambers.

"The other one looked at was our sewage and maintenance programs, so we can get some funding to run our sewage and water treatment plant as well," he said.

"The next day the Premier had a meeting there will all the Mayors of the Cape but unfortunately the CEOs weren't allowed to come into the meeting so I was a bit disappointed in that.

"I think also it was a rushed kind of meeting and there should have been more notice which forces people to listen to Peter Beattie instead of having any real input for themselves.

"I think if the government is going to call an important meeting like that I think we need to be prepared and able to take our issues to the government and make sure they're serious about it. "We've got to have everything in place so we can have our issues ready and know they're going to take us seriously.

"But I think it was a positive meeting although whether or not the government will follow up some of the issues we raised with them.

"For our council here I raised our concerns about our CDEP and AMP, they were the two main ones.

[continued page 2...]



INSIDE:

All the news from CDEP/Housing/Kindy/UAW/SES/BRACS/Community Store and more!
PLUS did your child meet the Bunnings Santa before Xmas?
See our centre spread poster on pages 6-7!

From the CEO's Desk...

Council Committees

At its first meeting of the year the WWASC resolved to adopt a Council Committee Management System.

The following committees were set up: Corporate Governance and Administrative Committee; Infrastructure Committee; Economic Development Committee; Community and Lifestyle Issues Committee; and, Culture and Natural Environment Committee.

Each Committee will consist of members from three distinct groups: the Councillors, Council Staff and Community Members. Council is now inviting community members to put up their hands to serve on the various committees. This approach, we hope, will help in sharing and broadening the degree of community participation in Council matters.

Corporate Plan

Work on the Wujal Wujal Council Corporate Plan has already been discussed with the staff and the council and as per the requirements of the Queensland Local Government Act (1993) the document will now be open to public consultation before the council can actually adopt it. Copies of the endorsed corporate plan will be made available to the community for their comments.



Deputy Mayor Keith Bush, CEO Peter Opio & Mayor Desmond Tayley

Footbridge

At long last funds have been secured for the reconstruction of the Wujal Wujal footbridge and work on the \$1.4 million footbridge is about to start. Once the project is completed it's expected there will be enormous benefits to the community and the wider public.

SIP

SIP stands for Security Improvement Program. In 2006 the Council received some \$27,000 from the Queensland Local Government department which were used to fence and tidy up the workshop area. We are grateful to the Queensland Government for their assistance to brighten up the area and make it safer and more secure.

Community members will be kept informed of the progress being made on these initiatives.

[Continued from page 1...]

"There's going to be a follow-up meeting in April, or within two months, with the Cabinet and the Mayors.

"During that time everyone agreed to appoint three liaison people to continue to communicate with the government, for our representative we put in Vince Mundraby and there was Jesse from Bamaga and Greg from Hopevale as well.

"So they'll take our issues to Warren Pitt and he'll take them from there to the Premier and we'll have positive things come out of that, although the biggest question is whether or not the government will do it."

He said they then had a very useful meeting with Minister Warren Pitt.

"After the Premier left I think it was good of Warren Pitt to sit down there for another two hours with all the Mayors of the Cape and we had a chance to say how we wanted to develop this process," he said.

"I think he's genuine and you don't get many politicians like that and it was good to hear the Premier admit he'd been putting our issues on the back burner so I think it was positive."

Another outcome of the Tablelands' meeting was developing a relationship with Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson who was appreciative of the Council's patience over issues such as the new police station.

"The original tender was withdrawn so that has to be reviewed again and hopefully we'll see some result by June," he said.

"He also gave an undertaking to get monthly updates on progress with funding for a 4WD police vehicle for our Community Police and other policing issues in Wujal Wujal."

Council training

Cr Tayley also said Councillors and staff, or both, had attended a number of training courses as part of the change over to Shires.

"I think it's good training for our elected members and I think it should be continued through the year so when new councillors come on board they're aware of their roles and responsibilities and understand how the Local Government Act works," he said.

"It will help them manage the community a lot better so I think the training we do is important.

"I've been in the previous council and we've gone through from the Community Services Act to the Local Government Act, and I've seen a lot of changes just in that short period of time.

"For me it's a big change and it's challenging but the training helps us to do our work a bit better and to really understand how local government .

Deputy Mayor Keith Bush said he thought training assisted with professionalising the role of the Council.

"I think it gives us a lot better understanding of how things like budgets work and how finances are done. It's given me a lot more confidence in how to check the budgets," he said.

Cr David Jackson said he appreciated the opportunity to learn.

"There are lots of things I didn't know before just as a normal person but the training means I feel I've learned a lot about being a better councillor," he said.

Wages returned to under award court claimants

Under Award Wages claimants from Hopevale and Wujal Wujal can look forward to progress on their claims following successful payouts to five claimants from the two communities.

In December last year a successful appeal to the judges resulted in cheques for the individual claimants "being in the mail" with more than 100 claimants waiting in the wings for their payouts.

Cr Tayley congratulated everyone who had been involved.

"I think it's a positive thing, but it just doesn't stop here, we've got to keep fighting for the ones who are already deceased and there were others as well so we shouldn't give up, we should keep fighting for the ones who didn't receive it," he said.

"The decision sets a milestone where the government needs to recognise the other applicants as well, they should get the ball rolling.

"And not to forget this issue has implications for stolen wages as well, just listening to some of the old people talking about what happened years ago in the past, there was a lot of injustice done to indigenous people back then and still today you see it."

Marie Creek (*pictured above*), proud owner of a new



four-wheel drive, said it will happen for the other claimants.

"It's been stressful waiting for this answer but we hung in there," she said.

"When it finally came down to this I was a bit sad how come only the four of us was getting it and not the other applicants but it will happen.

"I'm going to go to more courts for them to help them with their processes and all the other stuff they have to go through.

"I'll keep going even though I'll get mine but I've got to keep going because I didn't actually pick anyone to be a spokesperson for the next lot of applicants."

She said they had waited 20 years for their payments to come through and that payments for claimants in Doomadgee, Aurukun and Mornington Island could now be followed through.

Historian Dr Ros Kidd said it would take time to establish the exact wage loss for other claimants.

"But research is already under way for the next group from Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal who would like to negotiate a settlement and I believe the government is acting in good faith towards a smooth process for payments once each quantum of loss has been established," she said.

CDEP still working for community

Road and community work has continued in Wujal Wujal after CDEP restructuring as a result of government policy last year.

New CDEP Works Supervisor Billy Harrigan reports that bitumen extensions to the north towards the school and on the southside have both progressed.

"It's only 700m down the road at the moment but that will progress over the next couple of years, we're hoping to have it right down to Thompson's Creek over the next two years, we just have to wait for funding to come in," Mr Harrigan said.

"On the northside the road has already been sealed from the twin bridge out to Ayton and to the top of Davis Hill and to the middle store as well as patches to the new bridge there. "So it's getting there slowly after ten years, it has improved the health of

the community because it's stopped all the bull dust on the southside with all the new housing there."

Meanwhile CDEP Supervisors Vincent Tayley and Geoffrey Rosendale (*pictured below*), both



appointed in November, both say the work they have been doing is "pretty good".

Mr Tayley, who has worked for Main Roads and in other jobs further north, said CDEP had been a good experience for him.

"Without CDEP, for a lot of us when it first started in 1987, ever since then I've got all my machinery tickets now," he said.

"So I don't know what the young fellas are going to fall onto, they'll have to go out into the mainstream eventually."

Mr Rosendale said he organised other work gangs on the community and "helping out" Main Roads.

"It's sort of alright now but maybe down the track it will be a bit stronger or something," he said.

"We want to contribute to the community, we want to see our kids grow up here."

Housing News & Views

From Graham Cox, Housing Coordinator

Q-Build Call Centre hotline

"It's working a treat," Graham (pictured below with Housing Officer Zeila Gordon) says.

"People call the 1300 number, they send the order to Q-Build, Q-Build sends the order to me.

"If it's an emergency we fix it as soon as they've rung in, if it's power or sewage problems, they call me before the order comes in and we go and fix it straight away.

"Most other things we try and fix as soon as we can, we've got a dedicated maintenance carpenter, as well as a plumber and electrician.

"The electrician only works three days a week and the plumber's been going from the southside to the renovations and he's been super-busy so we've got another plumber coming to help him for a little while.

"It seems to be working really well, people are getting all their stuff fixed and the more people that report things the better it is.

"We've got an allocation of money to do the maintenance so the more people who report things the better."

He said it was only broken things or anything that's not right that can be fixed through the call centre.

"Doors, windows, kitchen cupboards, taps, outside taps, clothes lines, fences, driveways," he said.

"Everyone can't get done immediately though, there's a list

A(rt) work in progress



The Housing Office 'donga', next to the Council offices at Wujal Wujal, has become something of a work of art. Local artist Sam Friday (pictured above with his niece Ivy and some of his work at the HACCS building) said, "it makes the place more colourful".

"We wanted something like an Aboriginal painting on it, I just went for it and tried to encourage those young boys and young girls who have got nothing to do after school there," he said.

"And some of them came along, it turned out alright."



where we pick the best rent payers who keep their houses in good condition which is the new Council policy.

"Eventually everyone will get done but some people are going to have to wait or be patient."

Q-BUILD CALL CENTRE HOTLINE

for all your repairs and maintenance: 1300 738 616

New housing ready to go

The hard bit – connecting the southside to sewage – has been done and up to seven new houses will be all but ready to move in to in the very near future says Housing Coordinator Graham Cox.

"They'll all have sewage instead of the Ausclean system that we're having huge problems with," he said.

"I think it'll be better for the community, that they'll all be on sewage and it can be added to at a later date if any more houses go in down towards Degarra."

Introducing Renae & Fiona...



On 6 November 2006, the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Council handed over responsibility for the delivery of housing services in the Wujal Wujal community to the Queensland Department of Housing. The Council will continue to own its houses and has asked the department to manage the housing service.

Since November last year Renae Cunneen from the department has been visiting the Wujal Wujal community every fortnight to support you in managing your housing responsibilities. Renae will be joined in 2007 by Senior Housing Officer Fiona Johnson.

The department has policies and procedures in place for all tenants and those on waiting lists to comply with, to ensure housing related matters are treated fairly and consistently for everyone. Please take note of the following important responsibilities for tenants.

- **Timely rent payments** – if you are having difficulty making a payment or if you are worried about making future payments, please contact Renae as soon as possible, as suitable arrangements and assistance can be organised.
- **Make sure your home is in good order** – please note that tenants purposefully damaging their properties will be held responsible for the cost of the repairs.
- **Ensure maintenance requests are reported to the department's Call Centre on 1300 738 616.** The Call Centre is open 24 hours a day at the cost of a local call. A phone will be installed in the new year close to the Council chambers, to link you directly to the Call Centre and calls from this phone will be free of charge. If you have a repair that needs to be reported but do not want to call the Call Centre yourself, you can ask someone to report the repair on your behalf.
- **Keep the department informed of changes in your circumstances** – if you need to go away for an extended period, please contact Renae or Fiona to ensure rental payments are kept up-to-date, and your property is taken care of.

Renae and Fiona will continue fortnightly visits to the Wujal Wujal community and in the near future will be located in the old Centrelink office.

The department will also be responsible for allocating any vacant and new houses to people who have their name on a waitlist, which the department will manage. Applications will be placed on a waitlist in a queue behind people who have registered before you. You have to wait until your name reaches the top of the list before you are offered a home.

The first meeting of a Community Consultative Group was held on 20 December. The Council has nominated a member from each of the clans in the Wujal Wujal community to take part in the Group, which aims to advise, assist and recommend housing related issues to the Department of Housing.

For any questions regarding your tenancy or other housing related matters, please contact Renae or Fiona by phone 4039 8842 or mobile 0429 064 269 or visit them on their fortnightly visit to the Wujal Wujal community.

Santa's Chr Decemb



Christmas Visit December 2006



Daycare centre boost to child care services

Child care facilities in Wujal Wujal are about to receive a "big boost" with the kindy's acquisition of funds to develop and staff a new day care centre.

Deputy Mayor Keith Rush said the boost came in the form of placements available for 0-5 year olds.

"I feel really good about that because I'm very passionate about anything we can do for the children in Wujal Wujal because they're so isolated," he said.

"We need all the help we can get and DEST have come to the party by giving us that grant and we're very thankful for that.

"A lot of the mother's don't have anywhere or anyone to look after their children at the moment so it will be a good opportunity for some of them to get back to work."

Cr Coraleen Shipton said a planner was on the way and necessary extensions to the existing building should be ready after the wet.

She said they had applied to the Department of Communities to fund five positions as well as a cleaner to support the expansion.

"I've been working with the Department of Communities doing a survey, especially of working mothers, and we got a lot back who said they really wanted us to go ahead because it's hard to get a



Kids and 'drop-ins' at Wujal Wujal vacation care

babysitter," she said.

Mayor Tayley said it will be a relief for working parents to know they've got somewhere safe for their kids to stay during the day.

"It should also encourage them to go to work knowing their kids will be safe but it will only work if we get the support of the whole of the community to make it work," he said.

Community store building on success

Stock has doubled and a profit for the first time since Carlos and Alice Goncalves began managing the Wujal Wujal community store in February last year.

Mayor Desmond Tayley said he hadn't seen another store like it on any other community.

"I think the store is going very well, you can see that when you walk through the door, just the presentation of what's in there, I've been to other places and I haven't seen a store like that in any indigenous communities," he said.

Mr Goncalves said when they arrived there was just \$70,000 in stock on the shelves which has now been doubled, and resulted in more than \$1 million in turnover.

He said one of the biggest changes made was thanks to a new fridge bought out of improved profits.

"We've got the fruit and vegetable fridge now and the size has



Carlos & Alice Goncalves with Rita Williams

increased by about 35% which is very good because we can supply fresh stock and health food for the community," he said.

"You can check the prices, the fruit and vege I look for the best quality because if you buy the cheaper quality the price is cheap but if the quality drops as soon you take it from Cairns to Wujal Wujal and it

spends a week in the fridge. "We have to buy the top quality stock, we pay one dollar or two dollars more but the stock keeps for one week in cool room and it's still fresh, that's why my stock is fresh every day, because I pay for quality.

"If you buy the cheaper stock you put it in cool room and it's gone in two days. "This is the first year we've made a profit for the community, ever since we came here we started to make a profit.

"The profit we made went back into the shop with the new fridges and we used to have very low variety but now I've got lots of variety in stock." Former cleaner, now shelper Rita Williams said she enjoyed working there. "I enjoy being inside here in the shop working," she said.

Mayor Tayley said the store managers, workers and board members were to be congratulated.

"The community should be proud of the store," he said.

SES volunteers *almost* ready for anything!

Wujal Wujal's own SES is looking for members to assist them in cyclone preparation, to take advantage of training opportunities and ... to help them with sorting out their shed!

Acting Local Controller Stuart Marquardt (*pictured right*) said since stepping into the role in September last year he had done as much as possible "to get up to speed with everything".

Late last year Mr Marquardt and Mayor Tayley attended a cyclone summit together in Cairns.

"Some of the keynote speakers spoke about some of the devastation caused by Cyclone Larry in Innisfail earlier last year, they also had speakers who worked on Hurricane Katrina in Florida so they spoke about their experiences," Cr Tayley said.

"I think some of the information we got from there was very useful, especially in terms of awareness and how we should prepare as a community and as a local government. "I would encourage our senior staff in particular to go down and participate in something like that so we can work effectively in case of disaster." Mr Marquardt agreed it meant a more productive outcome for Wujal Wujal. "I suppose the big challenge from something like that is to come back

and resource your members and your community so they can benefit," he said. He said complacency was one of the biggest dangers.

"The big thing is to prepare before a cyclone, to make sure your yard is cleaned up so nothing can go flying and not to fall into complacency as a state of mind," he said. "I'd like to encourage the community to get involved with the SES because it's a service that we all benefit from and we need to be ready when the need arises."

He said the local group currently had 15- 20 members and a small waiting list.

"It's a fairly involved process to become a member, it's not just an application, you need to go through a safety induction, photo, criminal history check, etc," Mr Marquardt said. "Opportunities will be made for people to become qualified for CPR and Seniors First Aid, of course that's a fairly big pre-requisite to be an active member amongst all the other things needed.

"There's lots of opportunities for

training, including things like chainsaw certificates, road accident retrieval, rescue, flood boat, vertical incline as well as communications and even things like team leaders and how to manage a group of volunteers and work as a team.

"We've got a long way to go with our team here, we've just acquired a shed, we've got a flood boat there and we've got a lot of equipment sitting there.

"But the shed itself, we need to get into a format where we can store spare parts and oil and things like that so there's a lot of work that needs to be done so we can get it to a standard.

"People have already volunteered to do what they can but there's no 'i' in team, the more we have the better."



Dump closure forces need for transfer station

Closure of the Ayton rubbish dump has left Wujal Wujal ASC with no available place to dispose of household waste other than driving it to Cooktown. But Environmental Health Worker Patrick Minniecon (*pictured left*) said with the wet season imminent that means rubbish will have to stay on the community, so a waste transfer station is the only safe alternative.

Mr Minniecon said discussions have been ongoing "in regards to what needs to be done so there's no health risks whatsoever".

"Safety for the community is the first priority, especially so that household rubbish isn't being piled up. There will still be rubbish collection but our ability to transfer it now with our current compacting truck is not dependable, it needs to be replaced and the travel from Wujal Wujal to Cooktown is also taking its toll," he said. "I'd say within the next six-twelve months that truck won't be capable of doing that."

Mayor Tayley urged people to consider carefully what they were putting into their rubbish. "Minimising what people put into their rubbish bin will help," he said.

BRACS back on-air

Local taste and talent has the chance to shine with the re-emergence of Wujal Wujal deadly sounds in the form of BRACS up and running again for the first time in some years.

"BRACS is up and running, thanks to Cr Jackson, he went there and spoke to some of the women in the community and encouraged them to come forward and use the system," Mayor Desmond Tayley said. "As a result three women have put their hand up and now they're on two days a week on CDEP but Council is talking to a few of the departments to try and get some

money for full time positions."

Sonya Creek (pictured right), Penny Winkle and Kylie Matson were holding the fort late last year but were keen to enlist the help of others to help them get some local programming off and running.

Sonya said they'd had some training but for the moment were mostly staying with a music format.

"But this year we'll be going out and interviewing people in the community and getting them in to do their own promos and all that," she said.

"It's good to have it up and running again, especially now we've got a



computer instead of using cds."

Sonya said anyone can come and see how it all happens if they were keen to work, just ask where you can find them at Council reception.

Sports ovals ready to become reality

The wet season, funding demands and the cost of distance have caused some delays to the building of the two new ovals on the southside says Sport & Recreation Officer John Oswald.

"Sport & Rec Queensland had requirements or conditions for the funding that had to be met and we've only just been able to meet the main ones of those," he said.

"They were design and quantities, to get a costing of the work."

He said rather than pay for a consulting engineer to travel from Cairns to Wujal they negotiated with Cook Shire Council to share with them on a part-time basis.

"We came to an agreement that he'd work in with his work in Cooktown," he said.

"Then there was a delay with the draftsman but we've recently received them to forward to the contractors who replied to our invitation for interest in doing the work.

"Then it gets forwarded again to Sport & Rec and it goes from there."

He said there were other delays along the way aimed at saving long term costs and trying to get local contractors involved.

"Ideally we would like an experienced contractor who was able to engage some of the local CDEP workers," he said.

"We've also applied to modify the irrigation system, so instead of having a pop-up system we've decided to go with a reel-type irrigator.

"The reason for that was because of the maintenance of the pop-up system and there's less chance of injury for players where the openings are.

"Also the weather here means it's only two or three months we need to water so it was an economy of scale.

"It's a little bit more labour intensive but we've got the workforce here to facilitate that."

He said the two ovals will help to further progress Wujal sport.

"We'll have a split level between the two playing fields, there's a rugby/soccer ground and an AFL/cricket ground," he said.

"We've been talking to Clive Sykes and Robert Bloomfield who have done a lot of work with the boys rugby side.

"They've attended several carnivals over the past six months and there's already a lot of progress that's been made there with them getting fitter and better at the game."



Looking forward to the use of an oval are Sebastian & Lester at the Sports & Rec Hall

Cr Jackson welcomed back to work

Wujal Wujal Mayor Desmond Tayley has congratulated Cr David Jackson (*pictured right*) on his return to the Council after he was declared elected earlier this year.

"Just having that other person back on board again will make it a lot easier for us as a Council," he said, "and Cr Jackson has been with us before, he did very well when he was in, he has energy and passion to get a lot done."

Cr Jackson said he was grateful for a chance to finish the job he started before he made the "silly mistake" of resigning his position late last year.

"It was a silly mistake to put my resignation in over the cattle because by doing that I actually failed the people of Wujal because they voted me in to get some changes happening," he said.



"I let my emotions get to me over the stock crew because I'm very emotional about that and employing our own people here instead of the money going out of town all the time.

"As a councillor once you put a resignation on the table you can't withdraw it, it's a criminal offence to withdraw it because you're voted in by the people."

Projects on his horizon include keeping dollars in Wujal Wujal instead of work going to outside contractors by increasing the community's CDEP capabilities,

supporting the establishment of a market garden and getting the water pipeline project "back up and running". He said projects which could be fully owned and staffed by the community include cattle work, the market garden, sewage works and BRACS.

Community police step up to new role

Late last year Wujal's first **Community Police – a step up from Police Liaison Officers – were inducted into Queensland Police Service.** Senior Constable Mary Barlow (*pictured left*) said she and Robert Bloomfield had received a good response from the Wujal community to their new roles. "They've shown full support and respect to both myself and Robert and I think if we want respect from them we need to show them the same," she said. "Like any other job it has its ups and downs but it's what you make it." She said it would be easier for

them to operate when they have their own police station. Funding for the positions comes through QPS but is administered by the Wujal Council. "Under the by-laws we've got powers that even our state police didn't know we had so it's pretty new to us," she said. "We're still doing extra courses and training so that (state police) may be coming up in the future. "I've lived here more than 17 years and I've worked in various jobs around the community but I thought I needed some changes and this job came up so I thought I might as well try it."



School support on offer

Wujal Wujal Council has employed new **Community Participation Officer Robin Bloomfield** to support parents' efforts to get their kids to school.

Ms Bloomfield said there were only about ten consistent absentees in the community and that she has already spoken to some parents.

"They understood that it's mainly up to the parents to let them know how important it is and that they need their education," she said.

"We're trying to work on things like helping them with breakfast but I stress to them it's important for kids to get their education and we can help that parent to help their kids attend school.

"That's my position now so if they see me come knocking they'll know!"



*Mystery Santa!
Do you know who
this is? Also spotted
at the Health Centre
Christmas party
below...*



Above: Hula dancers Megan, Tamika & Davina at the Sports & Rec Hall



*Left: Cr Tayley,
Minister Warren
Pitt, Yarrabah Mayor
Vince Mundraby,
Cr Bush &
Peter Opio
in Wujal Wujal
in August last year*



*Elders at Wujal Wujal HACCS (below) and Health Centre staff (above) prepare for their
respective Christmas lunches late in December 2006*

